Result Area: Improve Student Achievement in Elementary, Middle and High Schools
Tollgate #2

1. Map of Causal Factors

A copy of the causal map is included at the end of the document, with an attached page that outlines examples under each strategy. In a PowerPoint presentation, these examples appear as you scroll over the specific strategy on the map.

2. Assess the performance progress in this result area-Update (New information since Tollgate #1 only)

Our results team reviewed the strategic plans submitted by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). The plans were consistent with the strategies our team has identified. There were no new issues raised regarding our assessment of performance progress or identification gaps and opportunities.

3. Propose high-level purchase strategies for this result area. What are the key areas where the state should take action, and how (if known at this point)?

Discussions to prioritize key state actions led to the identification of a philosophy statement. A commitment to high expectations for all students is a very important concept that must be an integral part of all strategies from pre-school and early education through grade 12.

We identified the highest priority strategies and the strategic improvements that could be made quickly. However, we recognized that several of these high priority strategies are heavily dependent upon other parts of the education system. For example, implementing a state system of professional development is dependent upon effective use of data and technology, content and curriculum, a supported statewide delivery structure and educational leadership.

The statements below reflect our underlying philosophy about high expectations for all and the role of system coordination:

> Increased student achievement in elementary, middle and high schools relies on a philosophy of great expectations for all students. This fundamental conviction does not disregard our many challenges to help students achieve Washington's academic standards. It is the underlying, motivating principle for all the strategies implemented and purchases made. It is infused in the delivery of every activity we consider.

> System-wide supports and collaborations will strengthen school efforts. The state's participation contributes to developing continuity of purpose and to providing efficient means to share information and conduct the business of schools.

In that context, five key strategies were identified. Again, other strategies not listed here are necessary for fully implementing and coordinating services at all levels of the education system. The five key strategies are: strategic and individualized preparation for staff; early learning and education; content – curriculum, instruction, and assessment; individual attention; and targeted secondary education reform.

Strategy: Strategic and Individualized Preparation for Staff
Recent studies have identified effective teachers as the single most important school-based factor in a student's success in school. Teacher effectiveness can be increased through high quality, ongoing, job-embedded professional development. High quality professional development helps teachers individualize instruction for students while aligning their practice and instruction with standards. Professional development can build cultural competence and help teachers remove institutional barriers to student learning. To increase student achievement and narrow the achievement gap among ethnic and income groups, we must focus on strategic and individualized preparation for staff, delivered consistently throughout the state.

Preparation for staff includes a continuum of activities including teacher preparation programs, initial certification, professional certification, and ongoing professional development. At this time, we recommend focusing initial state actions on one aspect of staff preparation: ongoing professional development.

Under the traditional salary schedule, teachers receive additional compensation for the accumulation of additional credits or clock hours.   Historically, there has been wide latitude in credits and clock hours teachers pursue.   These credits often do not have to be targeted to improving knowledge in currently assigned subject areas or in specific, identified training needs. The state recognizes these additional credits through the salary allocation schedule.

There is an opportunity for the state to support more rigorous professional development that is aligned with both state teaching and student learning standards. A regional delivery structure could be created with educational service districts (ESDs), large school districts, and institutions of higher education.   Further, there can be incentives for teachers to complete quality, ongoing professional development either through the existing salary structure or through additional incentives, such as a bonus for becoming certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, or increased subsidy rates for early educators who attain national accreditation.

Early education providers would also benefit from access and integration into the K-12 professional development opportunities. Both systems would benefit from greater coordination.

Strategy: Early Learning and Education
Recent brain research indicates that key brain development occurs in very early childhood. Other experimental research concludes that high quality preschool experiences result in higher academic achievement in elementary school and increased graduation rates. Efforts focused on at-risk students in low-income families will work to reduce the achievement gap.

There are numerous opportunities to expand early education and to improve the quality of child care services in Washington. Improving quality will be a product of the same professional development strategies listed above. Without financial incentives it is unreasonable to expect early childhood providers to increase their skills and knowledge.

Currently, only 60% of eligible four-year olds are served in Head Start and the state Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP). Children are eligible if their family incomes are at or below 110% of the federal poverty level. There is an opportunity to expand the state funded ECEAP as a strategy to prevent the development of a student achievement gap. New approaches are also possible, including voluntary, universal pre-school to be available on a sliding fee scale based on family income.

Strategy: Content – Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
To improve student achievement, curriculum must be aligned to the state standards, instruction must be aligned to the curriculum, and various assessment options must accurately measure the state standards. Instructional materials need to be culturally motivating to engage all students and narrow the achievement gap. Finally, secondary courses need to be more rigorous to adequately prepare graduates for the future. National and state data demonstrate that students need to pursue subject matter in more depth, particularly in mathematics and science, to be successful in postsecondary studies.

Articulated grade level expectations in basic subject areas will clarify how to set good foundations in knowledge and skill. High schools can build upon that foundation and offer students opportunities to expand and apply their work in more meaningful ways that will prepare them for post-high school pursuits.

There are opportunities for the state to better support the delivery of quality course content. Some elements are tied to statewide professional development strategies, such as efforts to make instruction more engaging for diverse cultures. In addition, the state could review and analyze textbooks and report on the degree to which they are aligned with state standards. This information would be useful to school districts as they make purchasing decisions. Initial review is starting with the Math Initiative and elementary reading, however much more could be done. Finally, continuing reviews of the WASL must ensure that our diverse cultures are reflected in state assessments.

Strategy: Individual Attention
Use of student achievement data to identify learning needs of individual students allows educators to target improvement strategies more effectively. School-wide improvement strategies (such as Success for All) document significant improvement in student achievement by focusing more on the individual needs of students. Professional development is essential to implement these school improvement strategies. Data systems can assist teachers and principals in the analysis of student information and facilitate the identification of strategies targeted to address specific deficiencies.

More attention must be paid to remediation strategies throughout grades K-12. In a standards based system, remediation is a critical element of a continuous improvement model. As

diagnostic assessments indicate student skill deficiencies, appropriate remediation and intervention strategies must be identified and implemented.

The state Learning Assistance Program provides funding to assist students who are below grade level in reading, writing or math. The formula is scheduled to change in the 2005-06 school year to better align the funding with identified student needs, based on family income factor(s). There is a significant opportunity for the state to consider the level of funding for the Learning Assistance Program and the manner in which it is distributed across the state when developing the funding formula for the 2005-07 budget.

<u>Strategy: Targeted Secondary Education Reform</u>
In a standards based system, a renewed focus on individual student achievement must be the center of concern. Opportunities to support students in efforts to learn basic skills must be provided if they have not mastered them before high school. This must be a renewed focus for secondary schools. These individualized efforts at high school are aimed at improving student learning, increasing the graduation rate, and narrowing the achievement gap.

Washington has successfully implemented a program of Focused Assistance for elementary schools needing to examine their structures and practices to create greater student achievement. A similar model of focused assistance needs to be developed for secondary schools to help them examine their practices in light of the particular needs and culture of secondary-school aged students.

Articulation, alignment and coordination with postsecondary skills will require a more rigorous curriculum in high school. One catalyst to increase the rigor is the expansion of dual credit, advanced placement, and college in the high school opportunities.

4. Provide guidance to agencies for budgets, analysis and legislation

    A. Identify operational or legal barriers to the implementation of the high-level strategies.
- ✓ State and federal statutory requirements regarding the surplus of materials for K-12 educational agencies create a complex, time- and space-intensive system.
- ✓ School district reporting requirements should be investigated and recommendations made on opportunities to reduce or simplify the multiple reporting requirements.
- ✓ An additional operational barrier is that the state does not pay for all education and care services before children enter the public school system. It is challenging to improve professional development, compensation, and quality of care when parents bear a significant portion of the cost.
- ✓ Part-time pre-schools are exempt from licensing for basic health and safety, employee background, and program content.

    B. Identify opportunities to reduce the price or improve the efficiency of current services.

- ✓ A centralized, comprehensive data system can improve efficiencies for school districts, ESDs and the state OSPI as reports are streamlined and automated.
- ✓ There are opportunities to improve efficiencies in the child care system by implementing technology improvements.
- ✓ Additional online or remote learning courses can provide new opportunities to deliver rigorous curriculum efficiently across the state.

C. Identify new initiatives and areas of budget focus that should be pursued based on Tollgate #1 and #2 analysis.
New initiatives are described below in section D.

D. Identify specific research projects and budget proposals that may aid the team's development of the detailed purchase plan in the fall.

Professional development

Current practice: The state of Washington significantly invests in professional development for K-12 teachers by incorporating acknowledgement of the university credits earned or other coursework taken. However, to a great degree, this current investment is not aligned to the development of teaching related to the expectations the state has for students. The state approves the providers of professional development, but does not articulate the content of the courses offered nor approve the course selections. For early child care providers, there is essentially no professional development system.

Statement of the desired solution: State student assessment data show that some broad areas of student skill need attention. The state should use this data to design comprehensive teacher professional development programs that will provide the skills teachers need to teach the content that students need to learn. These programs are to build on the principles of quality adult learning in a professional setting. Completion of these programs would be compensated.

Research: The OSPI and the Office of Financial Management should be charged with the following tasks:
1) Examine student data and teaching expertise data and determine areas in which state-defined professional development curriculum should be designed.
2) Design options to include early education providers in a state system of professional development
3) Describe process for designing coursework
4) Describe development of faculty to deliver coursework
5) Describe delivery system for making coursework accessible to teachers and providers
6) Recommend compensation amount, including tiered reimbursement model for child care providers, and process for documenting course-taking for compensation purposes
7) Submit budget data to support effort (course design, material development and provision to teachers, faculty training, phase-in plan, etc.)

OSPI and OFM shall consult with ESDs, the Washington Professional Educators Standards Board, DSHS and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development on the above issues.

Secondary Schools

Current practice: Secondary schools – middle and high schools – are facing the challenge of systemic change. The organization of middle and high schools has been relatively stable for years. The middle school is seen as a transition from elementary school to high school, and so incorporates structures such as student assignment to subject area classes rather an assignment to one primary teacher. Historically, high schools have been organized to meet the requirements for postsecondary education, with the collection of certain subject area courses in amounts defined by the state. As the attention moves from prescribed seat time to content/skill mastery for students, it is necessary to design structures and opportunities that focus on mastery of the basic requirements, support expanded rigor in content areas as well as provide preparation for the student's world after high school.

Statement of desired solution: Models of student-centered programs and supports are available for use by schools with the appropriate guidance and resources for implementation.

Research: The OSPI should be charged with:
1) Developing individual student plan templates for achieving high school graduation and preparation for steps beyond high school
2) Providing course outlines for reading, writing and mathematics intervention and remediation efforts, complete with instructional resources, strategies, and staff development opportunities
3) Developing a Focused Assistance model that provides a structure for districts and schools to examine their practices and implement changes in curriculum, student opportunities, staff roles and professional development
4) Developing a school improvement process that analyzes the rigor, relevance, and alignment of course content to state standards and postsecondary opportunities

Educational Service Districts

Current practice: State statute created ESDs to assist the OSPI and the State Board of Education and to provide cooperative and informational services to school districts. The ESDs have few formal, statutory ties to the OSPI. However, many state programs utilize ESDs as a regional delivery structure often defined through contractual agreements.

Statement of the desired solution: A vision for regional educational service areas that support state student achievement goals and provide local school districts with appropriate operational assistance, with an emphasis on a regional professional development system.

Research: The OSPI in concert with the ESDs should be charged with:
1) Recommending changes to the role and functions of the ESDs to increase their capacity to help achieve cost-effective solutions to state education goals
2) Developing an operational design to support schools in meeting student achievement goals
3) Clarifying or defining the relationship between the state and regional ESDs
4) Assign costs to the performance of new and transition functions

Surplus Materials

Current practice: School districts and ESDs must follow the statutory requirements for the procurement and subsequent surplusing of materials purchased with state and federal funds. The requirements are found in education statutes and regulations, state purchasing statutes and regulations, specific program statutes and federal statutes and regulations.

Statement of desired solution: Relieve the school districts and ESDs of the warehousing burden and costs associated with the required retention of surplus materials.

Research: The OSPI in concert with the ESDs should be charged with:
1) Determining all requirements for the maintenance and surplusing of educational materials
2) Estimating the extent of the current warehousing program of surplus materials
3) Recommending statutory and regulatory changes that relieve the long-term burden on the education system
4) Recommending alternative uses for materials no longer needed by a school district or educational service district
5) Recommending possible efficient, coordinated systems for processing surplused materials
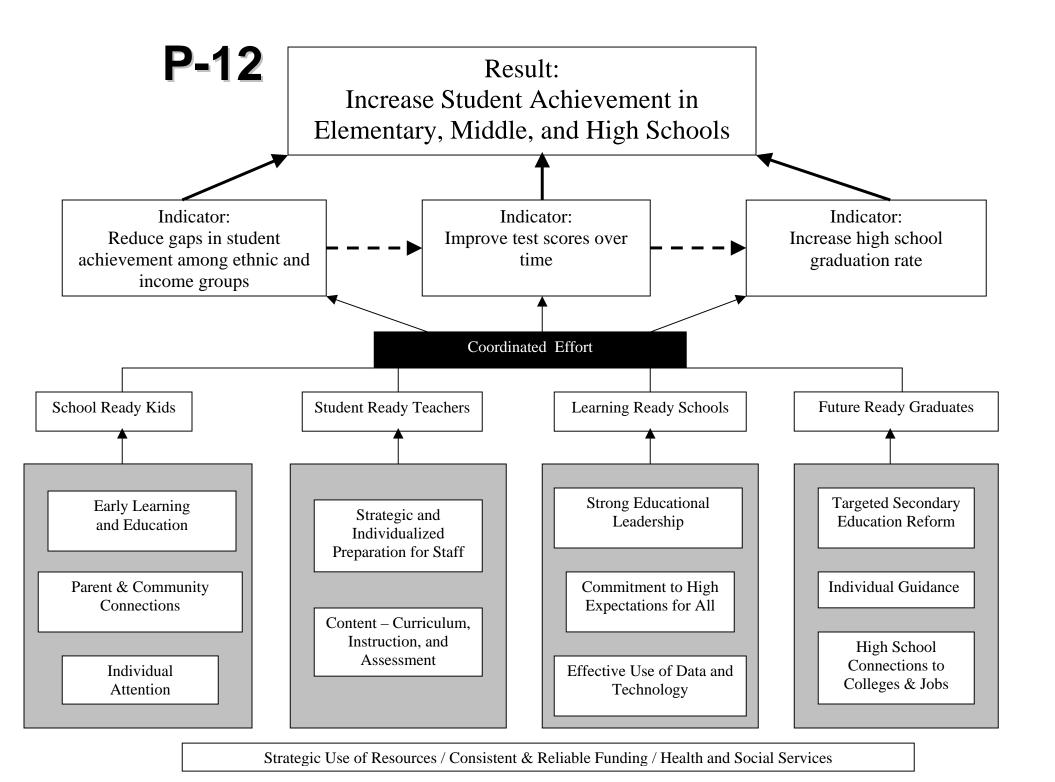
Data Systems

Current practice: The OSPI is in the process of implementing the secure student identifier. This is an initial step toward implementing a core student record system, which can be utilized to impact individualized instruction for students and evaluate program effectiveness. OSPI also has undertaken a review of the current data collection in the personnel record system. Currently the personnel data system is not integrated with the certificate data system or district financial information. Additionally, the DSHS is developing an automated system for child care. This system could improve accuracy of child care payments, streamline licensing activities, and align child care provider professional development with licensing requirements.

Statement of desired solution: Fully implement a core student record system, linked with pre-kindergarten data, and implement a core personnel and program data system. This resource would provide policy makers, researchers, districts, teachers and parents a consistent, efficient, and cost-effective means to record, store and access educational system information.

Research: The OSPI should be charged with:
1) Identifying phase-in approach for core student record system with identified operational services at each phase and recommendations for statutory authorization
2) Reviewing current data structures and identifying measures to integrate the data in these individual systems
3) Developing a plan to implement a comprehensive, integrated educator information system, including a central repository of educator qualifications, electronic certification, and continuing education records
4) Identifying measures to improve quality of educational data inputs

The DSHS should be charged with creating a proposal for an E-child care system, including plans for how this information can be linked to a comprehensive K-12 data system.

P-12

Result:
Increase Student Achievement in Elementary, Middle, and High Schools

Indicator:
Reduce gaps in student achievement among ethnic and income groups

Indicator:
Improve test scores over time

Indicator:
Increase high school graduation rate

Coordinated Effort

School Ready Kids	Student Ready Teachers	Learning Ready Schools	Future Ready Graduates
Early Learning and Education	Strategic and Individualized Preparation for Staff	Strong Educational Leadership	Targeted Secondary Education Reform
Parent & Community Connections	Content – Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Commitment to High Expectations for All	Individual Guidance
Individual Attention		Effective Use of Data and Technology	High School Connections to Colleges & Jobs

Strategic Use of Resources / Consistent & Reliable Funding / Health and Social Services

Causal Map Strategy Examples

School Ready Kids

Early Learning and Education
- ✓ Early Learning Benchmarks
- ✓ Expand Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)
- ✓ Provide voluntary/ universal pre-school

Parent and Community Connections
- ✓ Community Outreach -- translations for communities; building relationships
- ✓ Relationships - mentors, grandparents and early education providers
- ✓ Parent Involvement

Individual Attention
- ✓ Targeted Instruction/More Time/Extended Learning
- ✓ All-day Kindergarten (targeted)
- ✓ Smaller School size

Student Ready Teachers

Strategic and Individualized Preparation for Staff
- ✓ Consistent staff development (ongoing, job embedded, continuous improvement model assessing effectiveness of professional development, consistent across state; available to early educators and K-12 staff)
- ✓ Consistent quality teacher preparation programs
- ✓ Compensation and incentives for endorsement and completion of state and national professional development, including early educators

Content – Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
- ✓ Aligned to standards
- ✓ Culturally motivating
- ✓ Diagnostic Assessments

Learning Ready Schools

Strong Educational Leadership
- ✓ State, regional and district leadership – coordinated services
- ✓ Principal Leadership
- ✓ Mentors, Lead Teachers, Facilitators

Commitment to High Expectations for All
- ✓ Courageous conversations – confront bias in ideas and expectations and build capacity
- ✓ Celebration of success
- ✓ Positive and safe student learning environment

Effective use of data and technology
- ✓ Better quality/more efficient use of data and technology for program delivery and support
- ✓ Utilization of data to identify individual strategies, targeted instruction, and targeted remediation for students
- ✓ Utilization of data for program reviews and to inform policy development

Future Ready Graduates

Targeted Secondary Education Reform
- ✓ More focus/assistance from state
- ✓ More rigorous courses
- ✓ Designing relevant professional development to incorporate basic skills area instruction in middle and high school courses

Individual Guidance
- ✓ Guidance / Counseling
- ✓ Individual graduation plans
- ✓ Standards-based report cards

High School Connections to Colleges and Jobs
- ✓ Articulation, alignment, and coordination with post secondary (AP, dual credit, skills levels/entry requirements, etc)
- ✓ Relevance of curriculum / Culminating Project
- ✓ School-to-work transitions / Pathways